

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL MONTREAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0251

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA, FR
SUBJ: LEVESQUE TO VISIT FRANCE THIS FALL

REF: QUEBEC 170

1. RENE LEVESQUE WILL MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE IN OCTOBER, ACCORDING TO A PRESSE CANADIENNE WIRE STORY TODAY. CITING INFORMED SOURCES IN PARIS, STORY ADDS THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING WILL DELAY HIS OWN OFFICIAL VISIT TO CANADA AND QUEBEC WHICH HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR THIS FALL.

2. DURING LEVESQUE'S VISIT, ACCORDING TO SAME PARIS SOURCES, SEVERAL "IMPORTANT MINISTERS" WILL AFFIRM THEIR "UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE, WHILE GISCARD AND RAYMOND BARRE MAY REMAIN CAREFULLY ALOOF. LEVESQUE, STORY CONTINUES, IS VIEWED BY MANY IN HIGH PLACES AT THE QUAI D'ORSAY AS "CHIEF OF THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF QUEBEC". IN REFERENCE TO GAULLIST SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISM SOURCE REMINDED INTERLOCUTOR THAT MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS CLAUDE MORIN, ON RECENT VISIT TO PARIS, WAS TREATED TO SIMILARLY WARM WELCOME BY JACQUES CHIRAC, WHO ENTHUSED
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THAT "WE ARE WITH YOU HEART AND SOUL IN THE HISTORIC ENTERPRISE WHICH YOU HAVE UNDERTAKEN" IN QUEBEC.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, TEMP OF MINSTERIAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN PARIS AND QUEBEC REMAINS HEAVY. FRENCH MINISTER OF JUSTICE ALAIN PEYREFITTE WILL REPORTEDLY COME HERE IN SEPTEMBER IN ORDER TO PUT FINAL TOUCHES ON PLANNING FOR LEVESQUE'S

VISIT THE FOLLOWING MONTH. FRENCH MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE RENE MONORY WILL ATTEND A MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES IN MONTREAL IN OCTOBER, ALONG WITH A HUNDRED FRENCH INDUSTRIALISTS. ON THE QUEBEC SIDE, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BERNARD LANDRY WAS IN PARIS FOR FOUR DAYS LAST MONTH, WHILE MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES YVES BERUBE WILL TRAVEL TO PARIS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO SIGN AN UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE EXPLORATION AND MINING OF COPPER IN QUEBEC.

4. COMMENT: ASSUME PARIS SOURCES OF STORY ARE GAULLISTS WHO WISH TO CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT POLITICALLY THEIR SUPPORT FOR FRANCOPHONE DIASPORA AS MEANS OF EMBARRASSING GISCARD. LEVESQUE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY WISH TO ESCAPE FROM THE GAULLIST EMBRACE. CLAUDE MORIN TOLD ME AFTER HIS RETURN FROM PARIS LAST SPRING THAT HE EXPECTS THE SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST FRONT TO WIN NEXT YEAR'S FRENCH ELECTION. SHOULD THIS PREDICTION BE ACCURATE, CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH CHIRAC AND OTHER GAULLISTS COULD ALIENATE BOTH PRESIDENT GISCARD AND LEADERS OF FUTURE GOF AT TIME WHEN QUEBEC MAY WISH FOR THEIR MORAL SUPPORT IN ITS STRUGGLE WITH OTTAWA.

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